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gird their dead with a sheepskin loin cover (*ba suona pɛhug*) and taboo (*kih*) the tortoise (*pakur*) and the water-tortoise (*mieŋ*)'. The people of Zubiuŋ, as we have seen, also fix upon their mortuary and funeral rites and their totemic avoidances as the two main indices of their affinity with the Talis. They add to this their special ritual relationship with the Earth, symbolized by the office of the tɛndaana.

Most of the Talis, it is true, gird the dead (that is, males who have begotten children before they die and are therefore considered to be socially mature) with a sheepskin; but there are a few exceptions. The people of Ka'ar use an oribi (*walag*) skin, and the people of Gorogo, as well as some of the Teelag lineages, use only a piece of string

The sheepskin has the same ritual value for the Talis ~~as the~~ goatskin has for the Namoos. Identical beliefs and attitudes lie behind these differences of usage, which are clearly a function of the social cleavage between Namoos and Talis. Members of either group often have great knowledge of the mythology, the ritual practices, and the distinctive beliefs and customs of the other group. They pick up this knowledge when they go on visits to their maternal kin in the other group, and the underlying identity of beliefs and values makes this easy. Yet it would be inconceivable for the people of either group deliberately to take over the usages of the other group. The assimilations of custom that have taken place have been unconscious.

Talis explain deviations from the common ritual, such as those of the people of Ka'ar or of Gorogo, by the cliché, 'Our ancestors desired it so'. Thus the Gorogo people claim that their founding ancestor originally came from the Woolaga country. They still have ceremonial ties with the people of Chana, which they say was their ancestor's place of origin. They connect their custom of putting a string on a corpse with this myth, for both myth and custom distinguish them from the other Hill Talis. It is significant that the Teelag lineages which have the same custom have no clanship ties with Gorogo, nor is any explanation offered by either group of the common ritual usage.

The Tallensi see the binding force of any observance held by the lineage or clan as deriving from an ancestor whose edict it is said to have been. The concept *kih*, it must be remembered, is applied not only to ritual prohibitions but also to ritual injunctions. The sheepskin loin cover for the dead is also a *kihar*. The moral imperative of a ritual prohibition or injunction—a *kihar*—is connected with the dependence of the lineage on its ancestors' goodwill for its survival and welfare. And there is another point. The most sacred duty owed by son to parent or parent to child is the performance of his or her funeral ceremonies. It is unthinkable, and it has never been known, for a native to fail in this duty, though nobody can compel him to do it. This is the case in spite of the fact that funeral rites are also the concern of the whole lineage and clan. In funeral ceremonies the structure of the lineage and clan emerges into action as perhaps in no other Tale institution. And it emerges in such a way as to show up clearly how the moral responsibility of the individual to his forbears is a function of his rights and duties as a lineage member and is a factor in the cohesion of the lineage.

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other lineages. Though the norms of clanship and the social bonds that define the clan are an extension of those that hold within the lineage, they mark out a wider field of social relations for the individual. It is through his clanship ties that the individual gets bound up with the social order as a whole; through them he becomes a member of the wider community of the Hill Talis, which in turn forms part of the yet wider and looser community, the Tallensi in general. Through clan membership one belongs to a community, defined not by specific rights and duties based on the spiritual jurisdiction of one's own ancestors, but principally by common values and common ritual interests. Within the lineage the social personality of the individual is an important factor of his behaviour and of the behaviour of others towards him. Sex, age, and status are significant. In relations between lineages the social personality of the individual fades into the background. It is submerged in the corporate unity of the lineage.

Totems, Clanship, and External Bɔyar

The social bonds of clanship, like those of the lineage, derive their validity from the ancestors. But it is now not a question of a particular known line of ancestry, but of the ancestors in general; and among the Hill Talis these are associated with the External *Bɔyar*.

The External *Bɔyar* is an elaboration of the lineage *bɔyar*, parallel to the elaboration of the lineage structure into the structure of the clan and the network of clanship. It is the seat of all the ancestors of the clans and lineages that make up its congregation. As we have previously learnt, each External *Bɔyar* is the pivot of a group of structurally connected clans and lineages, and at the same time the local embodiment of a single cult embracing all the Hill Talis. Thus the cult of the External *Bɔyar* maintains ritually sanctioned social bonds between a particular group of maximal lineages, and at the same time symbolizes the fundamental common values of all the Hill Talis. It is the quintessence of the social identity of the Hill Talis. Hence, they say that when a boy has been initiated into this cult, 'he at length knows (what it means to be) a Talɔŋ (*u pana baŋ Talɔŋ*)'. The esoteric significance of the fact of being a Talɔŋ has been revealed to the boy. Before that he was a 'woman', a 'child'; now 'he has become an elder'. These terms are used metaphorically to indicate the boy's transformation from a person who was merely a member of the lineage by birth into a full social member of the clan and the wider community.

The *Bɔyar* is the apex of the whole ancestor cult of the Talis. It symbolizes the idea of the ancestors in general, the concept of ancestry, one might say, in contrast to the notion of a particular named line of ancestors. Thus, the Hill Talis speak of the External *Bɔyar*, and often invoke it in ritual, as *Yaab*, Ancestor, that is, the generic, prototypical, anonymous ancestor. The External *Bɔyar* symbolizes the ritual value of the Ancestors to all the Talis. It implies the subjection of all the Talis to a common spiritual jurisdiction, deriving from the Ancestors. It symbolizes the continuity of the whole social order conceived as brought into being by the Ancestors, and kept in being under their spiritual

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593 578 the other taboos of first-born children. Its meaning is plain if we bear in mind what the gateway and the *zɔŋ* symbolize in the structure of the family and the lineage.[1] Significantly enough, a first-born daughter does not observe it.

Eventually, when the son's older children are reaching adolescence, the opposition between his father and himself culminates in his formal separation from his parental family. We have noticed before that fission in the joint family is basically due to structural and economic factors. In the case of an eldest son's hiving off, Tallensi say that it is often brought about by the jealousies of the womenfolk. The son's wife or wives complain that they are not getting a fair deal in the distribution of food-supplies in the joint family. They are always nagging at their husband on that account. So when a son 'goes out on his own (*yi u kɔkɔ*)' natives say it is in order the better to support his wives and children. But the separation is actually due as much to the relations between the man and his father as to the purely economic causes. It is an instance of the convergence and congruence of structural principles and economic necessities.

593 578 884 Most commonly an eldest son separates off formally by cutting a new gateway for himself in the family homestead. The native phrase is *bit u zanɔr* ('slit his gateway'), and it describes precisely what happens. The wall of the homestead is cut through so as to make an extra gateway leading into the son's quarters. Though he and his wife and children will very often use the main gateway, he is by status the owner of his own subsidiary gateway and cannot formally clash with his father. At the same time he achieves a considerable measure of economic independence. He will have his own bush farm and small home farm and be responsible for providing the bulk of the food required by his wife and children. But he still helps his father and younger brothers with their farm work, and receives some food-supplies from his father in return if his own supplies are insufficient for his needs. Sometimes, however, an eldest son moves out altogether. His father may let him build a homestead on a bush farm belonging to the family, or he may migrate to one of the peripheral settlements. As we have seen, it usually takes a few years for a son to achieve this step. I have heard young men who were pressing their claims for a separate gateway express impatience with an obstinate old father and even resentment against his apparent tyranny. But when the parting comes it is usually amicable, and father and son continue to be on excellent and intimate terms thereafter. The son is still under his father's final authority in jural and ritual matters.

593 578 777 *The Native Theory of the Tension between the Generations*

Tallensi explain the rivalry between father and son by means of the

[1] Cf. Ch. III above.

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of distribution employed in the division of sacrificial meat, as they have seen it among adults, with hardly an error. By the age of 8 or 9, boys are sufficiently familiar with the lineage organization to have grasped this pattern.

The division of sacrificial and ceremonial food expresses precisely the genealogical structure of the lineage concerned. The first division is into equal shares for each of the major segments of the lineage; then a further division takes place on the same lines within each segment; and so on down to the smallest segments. Thus one can see the children of an expanded family of two homesteads divide a mouse first into halves, one for children of one homestead, the other half for the children of the other homestead, and then each group apportioning their share equally amongst the children of different mothers in the same joint family.

As these rules show, the configuration of social relations characteristic of brothers is generalized throughout the social structure, not, of course, in all its intimate nuances and particularities but in its structurally relevant norms. Where two persons or corporate groups are defined by descent as 'siblings' or 'brother-groups' they act towards each other as brothers would in a comparable situation. This, as we have previously found, is a fundamental principle of lineage organization and action.

The equality *inter se* of siblings, except for sex and age differences, postulates equality of rights in relation to their 'fathers' and to one another. The fiction by which the token rights of a woman and her children in her father's house are upheld—the theory that but for the accident of birth she might have been a son vested with a son's rights—is evidence of this. These rights become significant when a young man enters into the full productive activities of the household and when a girl gets married. It is in virtue of the labour he contributes to maintain the household, and in virtue of the bride-price she brings in, that youth and girl claim these rights. Thus these rights exist, by definition, only within the lineage framework, in relation to the corporate unity of the lineage. They are epitomized in the rule that brothers are equally entitled to inherit patrimonial property, especially land.

We have previously seen, however, that the entry of a youth into full economic responsibility coincides with the increasing progress of his self-differentiation as a social personality in his own right. There is no inconsistency in this. The unity and cohesion of family and lineage depend upon a balance of rights and duties among all the individuals involved. And the recognition of their rights and duties presupposes their self-differentiation as individuals, partly in terms of their respective maternal origins, but equally in terms of their developing social maturity and productive capacity.

The climax of this process comes with marriage, or more accurately with the establishment of a family on becoming a parent. This brings the

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cleavages between *sunzɔ* siblings, both on the level of jural and economic relations and in sentiment, more prominently to the fore. It is the starting-point of those intra-familial tensions that, according to native views, stir up jealousies between co-wives who are wives of brothers. As we know, these tensions are said to culminate, very often, in quarrels over alleged unfairness in the apportionment of food-supplies, or over the treatment of children, or other ostensible acts of discrimination between co-wives. This is one of the reasons most often adduced for a man's leaving the paternal homestead to farm on his own. From these tensions arise also those disagreements between brothers over petty trespasses on one another's property or independence, summed up in the conventional formula of 'quarrels about chickens and eggs'. The stage is thus set for the typical process of residential and economic fission in the joint family along the genealogical lines of cleavage inherent in it. The equality in status and rights of brothers in relation to one another within the lineage thus attains its maximum emphasis in the social structure. The natives are well aware of the economic pressures behind this process; but they also see that these pressures would not work out in just the way they do if it were not for the inherent dichotomy in the structure of the family and the lineage. These two factors mutually determine and reinforce each other.

This brings up a point of some importance. It is conceivable that tension between brothers, whatever it is a symptom of, might result in young men separating after the death of their father, or after marriage, to take up land wherever they can find any. Thus a group of brothers would be scattered without respect to their lineage ties; and this process would in a few generations lead to the disintegration of the present highly localized lineage structure, and the emergence of a system of dispersed intermingled clans such as is found in many West African societies.[1] In fact, as previous chapters have shown, there is a slow process of dispersion in progress among the Tallensi all the time, but it has not led to a breakdown of the lineage system. The lineage ramifies, it does not break up into independent units that sever their genealogical ties with the main branch.

The basis of this is the fact that brothers separate but do not thereby relinquish membership of their maximal lineage. They do not sever their social and personal bonds with one another; which means that they do not forfeit any of their rights or relinquish any of their duties as sons and brothers. They are independent only within the bounds set by the corporate unity and the common interests of the lineage system. For it is only through his position in the lineage system that a Talǝŋ is able satisfactorily to secure his rights and perform his duties as a

[1] This would appear to be the case among the Ashanti (cf. R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, ch. viii) and the Jukun (cf. C. K. Meek, *A Sudanese Kingdom*, ch. ii), to cite only two widely separated examples.

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also an *ahɔŋ* of Sie and of Tɔŋ Kuorəg because other patrilineal ancestors of his were *ahɔs* of those clans. But when he was explaining his various ancestor shrines to me he accounted for his possession of one on the grounds of his being a *yaaŋ* of Sɔk—his patrilineal great-great-grandfather's mother's mother having been a daughter of Sɔk; and for another on the ground of his being an Arogo *yaaŋ*, since his mother's mother's mother came from Arogo. The distinction between *ahɔŋ* and *yaaŋ* in this sense implies corresponding differences in social relations. It follows, as can easily be seen, from combining the principle of lineage continuity with that of sibling equivalence.

Our analysis shows that the extension and transference of extra-clan kinship ties through the social system is not an indiscriminate lumping together of classes or groups of relatives. It is strictly regulated by the basic principles on which that system is built up. We must not forget, however, that the majority of these derivative social ties are only potential. The more distant or indirect they are the less frequently and the less effectively do they emerge in the form of actual social relations. We shall come back to this presently.

The diagram overleaf summarizes the results of the preceding analysis.

The Nuclear Relationship of Mother's Brother and Sister's Son

All extra-clan kinship ties, except those of uterine kin, are rooted in the relationship of mother's brother and sister's child. We proceed now to study this relationship in greater detail.[1]

Tallensi say that a mother's brother is a 'sort of father (*u yman ni i ba*—lit. he is like your father)', and a sister's child is 'like your own child (*u yman ni i bii*)'. These expressions conjure up, to the native, a picture of a personal and lifelong mutual interest and attachment similar to that of parent and child. How deeply it goes depends on the character and disposition of the individuals concerned, but it is always there. In part it is no more than a continuation of the interest a woman's close lineage kin have in her children, but it has distinctive features of its own and is counted of more value and importance than a maternal grandparent's interest in a daughter's children.

When a girl becomes pregnant for the first time her husband sends a message to her parents. Later, about the fourth or fifth month of her pregnancy, her mother sends one of her close co-wives to bind the girl with a perineal band (*suol voog*). This is a proud moment for her, as the perineal band shows her to have left maidenhood behind and to have entered the ranks of the matrons (*pɔŋayaaŋ*, pl. *pɔŋayaas*). Then, before

[1] The starting-point of this analysis is Radcliffe-Brown's theory of the social equivalence of the mother's brother to his sister in relation to her children, first expounded in his article 'The Mother's Brother in South Africa', loc. cit. 'Sister's son' in this chapter stands for 'sister's child of either sex', except when the context shows that a male is meant.

[Text continued on p. 301.—Analyst]

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into its social space. The most important of these is, universally, its mother or some one who acts as mother. Finally, there will be culturally defined ways of encouraging and stimulating or restraining a child in these efforts.

In Taleland these factors of social behaviour are notably interrelated. In general there is a marked parallelism between the trend of physiological and psychological development and that of social and cultural development—unlike our own society in certain strata of which social development lags behind psycho-physical development. A girl of 16 or so in Taleland is not only physiologically mature but has accepted the role of a mature woman in the psychological and social sense. She is married, she has economic duties to perform, she is socially responsible. A boy of the same age is pulling his full weight in the economic system, and it is regarded as entirely reasonable that he should be thinking of marriage and sex life, though it may be four or five years before he finds a wife. It should be added that physiological development among the Tallensi is probably somewhat slower than among ourselves. Accurate age norms could not, as will readily be appreciated, be established, but I have estimated that the average age of walking is about 2 years, of talking about 3 years (though single words like *mma*, my mother, and names of members of the family are used with infantile approximation at about 2 years). As far as one can judge by somatic indications, pubescence in boys commences at about 14 years. Girls, according to my wife's observations, do not as a rule menstruate before the age of about 15–16 years, by which time they have frequently been married for a year or two.

This close correlation between psycho-physical and social development is reflected in the notion held by the natives that physiological growth is a natural process, like the growth of plants and animals. The Tallensi have no elaborate transition rites to mark the passage from one stage of growth to another. Unlike many other West African peoples, they accept the onset of puberty in boys and girls, which they recognize by special terms, with the same casual rationality as they accept the cycle of time itself. Health and well-being of the body must be safeguarded with all the resources of their empirical and magical knowledge, but growth in itself is not a matter of cultural emphasis. It is of the very nature of human life. It emanates from